



Urban Forestry

SUMMERTIME TREE CARE

Help your trees beat the heat

It is especially important during periods of hot, dry weather to provide both young and mature trees with enough water to keep them growing strong. Newly planted trees need at least 10 gallons of water for every inch of stem diameter, at least once per week. Mature trees benefit from weekly watering, particularly during drought.

To encourage a deep, drought-resistant root system, mature trees should be watered at a low volume, for long periods of time, in multiple locations underneath the tree. It is best to water trees late at night or early in the morning.

What are those caterpillars?

Many of Wake Forest's street trees are oaks. In late summer, a caterpillar called the orangestriped oakworm may eat many or all of the leaves of affected oak trees in neighborhoods throughout Wake Forest. These caterpillars are part of the native ecosystem, and birds and other predators typically keep them under control. Without any caterpillars, there would be no butterflies or moths.

Because oakworms arrive late in the growing season, they do not usually affect the health of the tree, although they may temporarily impact the way the trees look. Extreme outbreaks of the orangestriped oakworm may be controlled with insecticides containing BT (a natural chemical used by organic farmers), which are available in local hardware stores.

Mulch your tree the right way

- Make sure there is no mulch against the base of the tree. Mulch against the base can cause termites and fungus that weaken and kill the tree.
- Make sure that mulch is pulled back at least three inches in all directions from the trunk. Keep the mulch less than three inches deep—any deeper and the roots will have difficulty finding air and nutrients.
- The mulched area should be at least six feet wide to keep mowers and trimmers away from the base of the tree.

Trees are an important part of Wake Forest's identity and provide many benefits.

Large healthy trees:

- Make businesses more appealing places to shop and dine
- Have been shown to reduce crime, energy bills and stormwater control costs
- Can add up to 10% to a property's value
- Filter and remove pollutants from the air
- Make neighborhoods safer and more comfortable for exercising



Orangestriped Oakworm

The Urban Forestry Program, a division of Wake Forest Parks & Recreation, is responsible for all trees in town parks, street right-of-ways and public spaces.